

PARK BOARD MINUTES
February 10, 2010
Gier Community Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Kibbey, Paul Carrier, Cynthia Ward, Dusty Fancher,
Patrick Murray, Ron Lott (arrived after meeting started)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Luke Canfora (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT: Murdock Jemerson, Parks Director; Dick Schaefer, Landscape Architect, Lansing
Parks and Recreation, Nancy Krupriaz, Executive Director Michigan Trails and
Greenways Alliance; Harmony Gmazel, Land Use Planner, Tri County Regional
Planning Commission; Mindy Biladeau, Executive Director, Principal Shopping
District; Loretta Stanaway, Friends of Lansing Historic Cemeteries (FOLHC);
Harold Leeman, Gier Advisory Board; Kellie Brown, Interim Board Secretary

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:10 p.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS:

Stanaway stated the Friends of Lansing Historic Cemeteries (FOLHC) would like to ask if Dick Schaefer could get an estimate on the cost to replace the arch at North Cemetery.

BOARD MINUTES:

Murray moved to accept the January 13, 2010 minutes as submitted; seconded by Fancher. 5 yeas, 0 nays

Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation – Tri County Regional Planning Commission

Nancy Krupriaz, Executive Director Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance stated they have been doing this out reach presentation through out the tri-county area and it started with nine focus groups within local government and branched out to the communities, neighborhood groups and non-profit groups.

Nancy Krupriaz discussed a green infrastructure (GI) overview. Infrastructure is a system – gray infrastructure is water treatment facilities, communication facilities, roads and they believe green infrastructure should also be a system that would be planned up front, connected to each other, funded up front and carefully monitored through the years. A green infrastructure would consist of hubs and links; the hubs could be the parks or potential conservation areas and between would be connectors which could be trails or green belts.

In a green infrastructure system we have not only the scientific items like wetlands, rivers, lakes, streams, native habitat but also public amenities such as parks, athletic fields, trails, beaches, etc which are places where people gather.

Green infrastructure planning is different than traditional conservation because you are not just looking at a particular parcel of land and everything that's going on on that land, but all the land around it and what other functions the adjacent land serves; an economic, ecological or social function and how those different systems leverage each other.

The Natural Resources Trust Fund and other grants really look for planning on a regional basis across jurisdictions and the NRTF adds twenty points you can gain on a grant for being part of a green infrastructure.

Harmony Gmazel, Land Use Planner, Tri County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) stated their partners, along with TCRPC, contracted with Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) to create two new sets of conservation data. The conservation data is an assessment of our region of those places dominated by native vegetation and they have the potential to harbor rare or endangered species. This is the first time that such an inventory has been created for our region. MNFI is a statewide conservation planning agency that works with the offices of MSU Extension.

How MNFI identifies certain areas on our landscape is based on criteria they created. They looked at acreage of natural areas and based on the size of an area they were able to grant us points. There are six or more criteria that are based on whether an area is along a stream or river corridor and if it is connected to other natural areas, also whether or not a natural area could be restored. MNFI was able to pull up a state survey from 1816 and compare it to land cover from 2000 and if there were portions of natural area that contained 200 year old vegetation it was of higher quality for conservation and received higher points. Gmazel presented PowerPoint maps of scoring by MNFI. This information could be integrated into any planning efforts and grant opportunities.

Murdock Jemerson inquired what areas in Lansing are high quality natural areas as he would like to include this information in the Parks 5-Year Master Plan and grant applications. Gmazel pointed out areas on the map, which were areas along Sycamore Creek.

Nancy Krupriaz stated there is a low impact development manual with detailed designs and formulas on how to do rain gardens, permeable paving, neighborhood designs, green roofs, etc. There are several tools to implement the green infrastructure vision; one is the non-motorized system of trails and on-road connectors, parks and public land.

Murray stated he would be happy to sit down with their Americorp group to discuss where vegetation could be placed along the River Trail.

Presentation – Principal Shopping District

Murdock Jemerson started out by saying this presentation is not a new plan, it was seen a couple of years ago with the City Market plan and this the next phase of the City Market plan with is the ice rink and other entertainment venues.

Mindy Biladeau, Executive Director, Principal Shopping District, stated they have applied for a grant from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation in the amount of \$100,000 with a 50/50 match to offset the cost of the ice rink. This is part of the Urban Re-vitalization grant program and it does have to impact and be in downtown through a PSD. The PSD is working with the Lansing Economic Development Corporation who would be the source of the match. PSD has hired C2AE an architectural firm to obtain preliminary engineering estimates and budget estimates along with feasibility and cost of the project. They are also looking at the possibility of a splash pad and playground area to continue to develop the riverfront.

Murdock Jemerson stated this ice rink is a synthetic ice rink, which would be circular and is similar to what is located at Rockefeller Center.

Fancher inquired if PSD would continue to pay for maintenance, and PSD would.

FY11 General Fund Budget

Murdock Jemerson stated with the other presentations this evening and discussion on the Master Plan he will withhold the presentation on the budget. However, we are just getting started on the budget and if anyone

listened to the State of the City address you will know the City is facing a \$12 million dollar deficit. Department heads were told to start with an 11½% budget reduction, which is about \$1 million dollars from Parks.

Parks 5-Year Master Plan Draft

Murdock Jemerson stated this is a draft and he is receiving many comments and suggestions that he will forward onto Landscape, Architect and Planners (LAP) to add to this plan.

Dusty Fancher stated she noticed Red Cedar and Waverly are now referred to as Parks not golf courses.

Murdock Jemerson stated we will be going through a 30-day examination period on the plan and are looking at a Public Hearing for City Council around March 15 and he would like to hold the Parks Public Hearing at the March 10 Park Board meeting.

Cynthia Ward inquired if the additional information in the appendix like the sign in sheets from the public meetings, which contains personal information, needs to be printed in a public document.

Rick Kibbey inquired if the ice rink is in the plan, because if the ice rink is to happen in the next five years it would need to be in the plan.

Murdock Jemerson stated one thing that will be added to the plan is a list of other properties that are not dedicated, but are under the care of Parks.

Rick Kibbey stated under accomplishments he would like to see the addition of Maguire Park, specifics on the Hunter Pool renovations to identify the splash pad, handicap accessibility, climbing wall, and the historic renovation at Ranney Tower and also the Hunter Park Garden House needs more detail.

Rick Kibbey also stated Eric Schertzing, Ingham County Land Bank, has land throughout the city where houses are going to be torn down and Kibbey would like to see more areas like the Bard Dean Tot Lot. Parks can improve any neighborhood and he would like to see in the plan the option for the Board to take advantage of the land bank to get land along a river, creek or in tight areas to consider new, small parks.

Ron Lott stated he is a strong advocate of expanding the park system, but we are close to expanding what we are unable to take care of.

Rick Kibbey inquired if it was stated as in-holdings in areas which are environmentally sensitive like along rivers, streams or adjacent to or in existing parks.

Dusty Fancher likes the idea of adding onto park land and environmentally sensitive land, and community gardens and if we could put in broad language to allow area communities to come in and be involved.

Rick Kibbey stated he believes we are going to be called upon to dispose of some land and he thinks there is charter language which gives us a good, defensible position and he was looking to have a mechanism to pick up land, especially land we would want.

Pat Murray stated since Jemerson has to make an 11.5% cut and to pick up more land that we would be responsible for taking care of most of the time the timing just is not right.

Pat Murray also asked if the organization/associations listed on page 20 have formal agreements with the City.

Murdock Jemerson stated some do and others are adopt-a-park groups.

Murdock Jemerson asked the board members to submit their comments to him as soon as possible.

Harold Leeman clarified the April 1 is still the deadline for the plan. Murdock Jemerson stated yes.

Crego Park Grant Application

Murdock Jemerson stated he is working LAP and new ideas have been put together for this park, which is the largest park at 200 acres. First of all he has been in contact with DNRE to complete the paperwork and formally be removed from the state's contaminated list which could take the rest of this year. However, the DNRE has indicated they will be putting together a letter of support for this project and include that there are no harmful chemicals in the location of this plan.

Dick Schaefer, Landscape Architect, provided an overview of a conceptual plan and cost estimates to develop Crego Park which is for the addition of a restroom/pavilion, play ground, launch area for boats into Fidelity Lake, a boardwalk, fishing docks, and benches. It is also important to attach this to the existing River Trail.

Dusty Fancher inquired if there is a way to connect Fenner to Crego and then to the zoo.

Rick Kibbey inquired if there is an area for an observation boardwalk to accommodate 15-20 people and a naturalist for programming.

Paul Carrier voiced concerns about elementary age kids and the floating walkway not having rails and the "accidental falling" into the water.

Dick Schaefer stated the walkway would be 30" or less to prevent any problems with someone stepping off the walkway.

Rick Kibbey asked the Board if they wanted to approve the grant application to develop Crego Park.

Pat Murray moved to support the grant application, Board agreed unanimously. 6 yes; 0 nays

Motion carried

Dusty Fancher inquired if the grant could be written to mention cross programming between Crego Park, Fenner Nature Center and Potter Park Zoo.

MRPA Conference Review

Murdock Jemerson stated the theme was Survivor and everyone is in similar situations with budget. The first session was Directors only and a big issue was contracting out services. Another issue was the Open Carry Organization with weapons and concerns over this activity in Parks and it was suggested that we try as a organization to get parks added onto the exception list. However, our state organization stated we do not have the funds to fight the NRA.

The big star of the conference was Dr. John Crompton who is a distinguished professor from Texas A & M who has written many books on repositioning of parks and recreation agencies. It is incumbent on us to make sure to define who we are which is more than fun and games; and we do impact and levitate deviant behavior by the programs we offer and we do add to economic development of the city. We also impact energy cost by planting trees, which provides shade. We do not define ourselves by activities anymore; we define ourselves by the benefits of what we do.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Kellie Brown, Interim Park Board Secretary
Approved March 10, 2010